

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

*Please amend the claims as follows:*

1. **(Currently amended)** A method for preparing ~~treatment of~~ a human patient sample for ~~carrying out~~ performing a diagnostic method on the sample for detection of an infectious agent, wherein the sample is an endocervical fluid sample or a vaginal fluid sample, wherein the method comprises ~~which includes~~ the steps of:

a) treating the sample to reduce an inhibitory effect of the sample on the diagnostic method; and

b) carrying out performing at least one step of the diagnostic method in the presence of DNase.

2. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the DNase is present in an amount selected from the group consisting of: (i) more than 0.5 µg/ml, ~~preferably and (ii)~~ 0.5 to 100 µg/ml.

3. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, wherein the DNase is present in an amount selected from the group consisting of: (i) more than 1.5 units of activity per ml, ~~preferably and (ii)~~ 1.5 to 300 units activity per ml.

4. **(Currently amended)** A method according to any of claims 1 to 3, wherein the sample is treated ~~which additionally includes a method for preparation of a human patient sample prior to carrying out a diagnostic method on the sample for detection of an infectious agent, which preparative method includes the step of treating the sample~~ with an oxidizing agent.

5. (Original) A method according to claim 4 wherein the oxidizing agent is hydrogen peroxide (H<sub>2</sub>O<sub>2</sub>).

6. (Original) A method according to claim 5 using a working concentration of hydrogen

peroxide of 0.5% to 3% w/v.

7. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, wherein any of claims 1 to 3 or 4 to 6 which additionally includes the step of treating the sample is treated with a non-ionic alkyl glucoside surfactant.

8. (Original) A method according to claim 7 wherein the surfactant is n-dodecyl maltoside.

9. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 8 wherein the n-dodecyl maltoside is present at a working concentration selected from the group consisting of: (i) 0.01% to 0.04% w/v, preferably and (ii) 0.015% to 0.03% w/v.

10. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, wherein any of claims 1 to 3 or 4 to 6 or 7 to 9 which additionally includes the step of treating the sample is treated with either or both of PVA and PVP.

11. (Original) A method according to claim 10 wherein the sample is treated with PVA, preferably having an average molecular weight between 20 and 25 kDa and at a working concentration of between 0.01 and 0.5% w/v.

12. (Original) A method according to claim 10 wherein the sample is treated with PVP at a working concentration between 0.2% and 2% w/v.

13. **(Cancel).**

14. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, any of claims 1 to 13 wherein the human patient sample is obtained as a self-collected vaginal swab sample.

15. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, any of claims 1 to 13

wherein the method is for detection of *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

16. **(Currently amended)** A method according to claim 1, ~~any of claims 1 to 13~~ wherein the patient sample is a self-collected vaginal swab sample and the method is for detection of *Chlamydia trachomatis*.

17. **(Currently amended)** A method according to ~~any preceding~~ claim 1, wherein the method is a dipstick test method.

18. **(Withdrawn)** A kit comprising: a dipstick test apparatus for carrying out a specific infectious agent detection test; reagents required for said apparatus in order to carry out said specific detection tests; a DNase reagent for carrying out the method of any of claims 1 to 3.

19. **(Withdrawn)** A kit according to claim 18 additionally comprising: an oxidizing agent reagent for carrying out the method of any of claims 4 to 6.

20. **(Withdrawn)** A kit according to claim 18 additionally comprising: a non-ionic alkyl glucoside reagent for carrying out the method of any of claims 7 to 9.

21. **(Withdrawn)** A kit according to claim 18 additionally comprising: a reagent which is PVA and/or PVP for carrying out the method of any of claims 10 to 12.

22. **(Withdrawn)** A kit according to claim 18 additionally comprising: a non-ionic alkyl glucoside surfactant reagent as defined in any of claims 4 to 6 and a PVA and/or PVP reagent as defined in any of claims 7 to 9 for carrying out the method of any of claims 1 to 15.